

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The World Health Organisation has classified FGM as:

"all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organ for non-medical reasons"

1. Clitoridectomy: partial or total removal of the clitoris
2. Excision: partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora
3. Infibulation: narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal.
4. Other: all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area.

Definition



Watch for...

- A child spending long periods of time away from the classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems;
- A child having difficulty walking, sitting or standing;
- Prolonged absences from school; especially with noticeable behaviour changes on the girl's return could be an indication that a girl has recently undergone FGM;
- the emotional and psychological needs of children who may be/are suffering the adverse consequence of the practice, e.g. withdrawal, depression etc;
- A child asking for help or confiding in a professional;
- A child requiring to be excused from physical exercise lessons without the support of her GP;
- Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) or abdominal pain



Signs & Indicators

- Any female child who has a sister who has already have undergone FGM must be considered to be at risk, as must other female children in the extended family.
- Parents from practising communities state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period;
- A child may talk about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice of FGM is prevalent, including African countries and the Middle East;
- A child may confide to a professional that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion;
- A professional hears reference to FGM in conversation, for example a child may tell other children about it (be aware of the wide variety of descriptions);
- A child may request help from a teacher or another adult;
- Any female child born to a woman who has been subjected to FGM must be considered to be at risk, as must other female children in the extended family;



Duty

The Serious Crime Bill was amended in 2015 to include a

Duty to Report

For Health Care, Social Care and all Education professionals.
This is now a mandatory professional duty for suspected cases of FGM

Training is available to support Practitioners here



The Law

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

All forms of FGM are illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

1. It is an offence if anyone aids, abets, counsels or procures any form of FGM for a girl or a woman for cultural or non-medical grounds;
2. This act makes it an offence to take a UK national or resident overseas for the purpose of or to aid and abet, procure or carry out FGM;
3. Any UK National or resident is protected;
4. A person is guilty of an offence if he/she aids a girl to carry out FGM on herself;
5. There are defences with regard to this Act. No offence is committed by an approved person (i.e. midwife or medical practitioner or person training to fulfil these roles) if they perform such a surgical procedure necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or in relation to a birth or labour;
6. The penalty for FGM is up to 14 years of imprisonment

Female Genital Mutilation Briefing Sheet



Action

If you suspect a child might be at risk of this practice or has already undergone FGM you must contact
ART 01454 866000
or the Police on 101



**Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage
or Female Genital Mutilation is suspected,
disclosed or identified**

Under 18

How old is the person?

Over 18

Immediately call ART to alert Children's
Services on
01454 866000
If anyone is in immediate danger of
abuse or violence call 999
Follow Child Protection Procedures

Are they
pregnant or
caring for a
child? Call ART
01454
866000

Encourage adults to call the Safeguarding Co-
ordination Unit of the Police on 101.
Professionals must report concerns to Adult
Services on 01454 868007
If anyone is in immediate danger or abuse or
violence call 999

INITIAL ACTIONS

- Reassure the victim, take threats to their safety seriously and ensure confidentiality from family and community members
- DO NOT approach victim's family or community
- NEVER send an individual back to their family the police will help find support
- If an interpreter is needed, use an official service, never family or community members
- Advise victim to change mobile if relevant and turn off location services/GPRS capability within the phone settings
- Be wary of some services eg. Taxis as community or family may work in them
- Always assess the risk to any children in the family and make relevant referrals

RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES

Avon and Somerset Police, Safeguarding Co-ordination Unit ☎ 101

Forced Marriage Unit ☎ 020 7008 0151

Karma Nirvana Helpline ☎ 0800 599 247 (Honour Based Abuse & Forced Marriage Support)

Freephone 24hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline ☎ 0808 2000 247

Forward UK (FGM Support) www.forwarduk.org.uk ☎ 020 8960 4000

Integrate Bristol (FGM Support) www.integratebristol.org.uk

Daughters of Eve (FGM Support) www.dofeve.org